

Chapter 22

MARRIAGE IN HUNZA

THE Burusho population of Hunza is divided into four major ⁶¹⁴ clans, centred in Báltít, and several minor clans scattered over ⁶²¹ other villages. Aliábád, being a "new settlement," contained ⁵⁸² amongst its two hundred houses representatives of almost all the clans. Marriage outside the race is rare, but (as I have already said) exogamous marriage between the clans is the rule.

On the whole the Burusho cling to their settlements along ³⁶¹ the eight or nine-mile stretch of river below Áltít (two or ⁵⁶³ three miles up-river of Báltít), at a height of 6,000 to 8,000 feet above sea-level. They are not eager to colonize higher-lying districts, for they say their womenfolk refuse to live where the apricot will not ripen. If this is so the women show ^[263] sound sense, for the dried apricot is one of their staple foods and almost their only source of sugar. The favourite winter breakfast is a hot porridge of these *batéring*. It thus happens that the higher river-stretches above Báltít are mainly settled (if at all) by Wakhi immigrants from Afghanistan. These are a quiet, peaceable folk, markedly less intelligent than the Burusho, loyal subjects of the Mir, well content with their good pasturages and crops of barley and not missing the wheat and the apricot to which they are unaccustomed. A few Burusho colonies are scattered among the Wakhi ones, but, though friendly relations exist, the two learn little of each other's language; and intermarriage, though it would not be taboo, is very rare.

Similarly a couple of the lower Hunza villages are in- ⁵⁶³ habited by Shins, of the same stock as the Gilgit people, but ⁵⁸² again intermarriage is the exception. We had fully expected to

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Sports.

Sports are represented by Polo for men who own or can borrow horses, and children's games. The women at certain seasons amuse themselves with games of ball and swinging. 526

Religion.

By religion the Burushko of Hunza are Muhammadans of the Isma'ili or, as they term it, Maulāi sect, to which, however, they were converted from Shia-ism only three generations ago. 779

With the Maulais, restrictions, formalities and ritual are reduced to a minimum. The masjids of the former Shia days have been abandoned, and have been replaced in recent years by "jamā'atkhānas". There are no mullahs of the ordinary type. Instead there are *khalifa* (pl. *khalifāting*; *xalīfa*, *xalīfa'tin*), who are more servants of the public — being called in chiefly to perform the necessary ritual at marriages and funerals — than its spiritual leaders or teachers. Spiritual authority rests with the Pir, in this case 'Abdul Ma'ni, son of the late Shahzada Lais of Chitral. He himself now lives in Zebāk. He replaced the honoured Pir Jalāli Shah, latterly resident in Ishkoman, who died in February 1931. Two of the latter's daughters were taken in succession as his principal wife by the present Tham of Hunza, which affords an indication of the Pir's status in the country. 795 793

Religious observances and prescriptions do not play any very evident part in the life of the Burusho of Hunza, but this does not appear to have any prejudicial effect on their character or conduct. They seem to have firmly planted in them the root of morality and the social and domestic virtues. The Maulais pay tribute to the Agha Khan, the head of the sect. The Burusho of Nagir are Shiah (pl. *Shiāting*; *shā'tin*), a more rigorous and formal school, but they do not indulge in a fanatical interpretation of the duties and implications of religion. They mildly condemn the "moghūl" (Maulais) as misguided heretics and imperfect Muslims. 788 795 798

Social and Administrative Organisation.

The life of the people is based on the family, and then on the village or community groups which live within definite geographical 621

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621 limits and were originally it seems centred round the *khan* (khan, fortress or strong-place). The general security of later times has led to the scattering of habitations seen in more recent settlements like Aliabad. Inside these village-units, such as Baltit, Altit, Ganish, Haidarabad etc. there survive the names of tribal or class divisions. How far these divisions play any significant part in the communal life of the present day is a subject that remains for investigation.

565 Society is recognised as divided into the following general classes:
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1. Thamo: the Royal Family, including:
 - i. the Karëli, the royally-born on both sides.
 - ii. the Arghundaro, of commoner origin on the female side, but in Hunza children of wedlock.
2. Uyōngko or Akābirting — "The Great" — those who enjoy, or have the right to occupy, superior offices in the State, e.g. the posts of Wazir, Trangfa, Yarpa and Farāj.
These two classes do not work with their hands.
3. Bār, Bārē Sis, — These cultivate their land and work with their own hands, but, if personally worthy, are eligible for appointment to posts by the Tham. They are not required to carry loads or perform any inferior class of work.
4. Shadarsho — a large class who get their title ("servants") from their eligibility for employment by the Tham as couriers to convey notice of his movements, carry messages etc. They are exempted from menial labour. This class is increasing by recruitment from the next below.
5. Baldakūyo or Tsilgalasho — these are liable to have to carry loads for the Tham and Uyongko, and to wash for gold. They are exempt from the payment of taxes. The Tsilgalasho are Baldakūyo who are in the employment of Uyongko families and then do not carry loads, but on quitting such employment they revert to the status and obligations of the Baldakūyo. The numbers of this class are declining. Their ascent into the ranks of the Shadarsho is now controlled by the Tham; formerly it was in the hands of the Wazir and Trangfa.

ginḍawər, *ginḍawər* the "sinjid" tree, 000
 jujube tree and fruit; IUB, Panj.
berri (zizyphus jujuba). Ar. Pers.
 'unnaḥ jangali.

ginḍawər čhin Nz. a kind of bird,
 starling(?).

1. *giram*, *giram* h pl. community, clan, 621 ●
 IUB H. *guroh*, *qaum*; Bu. synonym
rom. — *warlti giram* (barn) the "Four
 Tribes" of Baltit, viz. *Diramitiḡ*,
Xurukots, *Bəratāliḡ* and *Borovḡ*. —
warlti giramo uyogko the headmen
 of the Four Tribes. *Baltitum warlti*
giram gati noma Hamačatiḡ ka
ast'am etuman the Four Tribes of
 Baltit assembling instituted a case(?)
 with the *Hamačatiḡ*. 258.1. *warlti*
giramər rajakiḡər qau sti call on the
 Four Tribes for communal labour.
 The translation "tribes" exaggerates
 the significance of these divisions.
2. *gir'am*, *gir'am -ičiḡ*, N. -iḡ y.

a. Isolated houses or hamlets situ-
 ated among the cultivated lands
 outside the "Khan", the formerly
 fortified village. — *Zungatiḡ gir'amolər*
 to the hamlet of Zungating. 320.1.

b. Roofed cattle-house, for goats
 and sheep.

(Presumably the same word as the
 preceding and ultimately deriving
 from Skr. *grāma*-).

- girav* dear, expensive, costly. Prs. 000
- gir'an*, pl. *gir'aiyo* x wicker basket or
 panier (for carrying grass, manure
 etc. on the back). 336.8. — *gir'ane* 585
niras the proceeding of the bride
 accompanied by the bridegroom, 4
 to 8 days after their marriage, to
 her father's house when they bring
 back a present of bread and dried
 apricots (*pfir'imuts ke baferin*).

made entirely of soft pliable leather, the lower part, including the soles, from yak hide and the upper part from cow or ibex hide.

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I wanted to learn as much as possible about the good people of Hunza. Therefore I was interested in their crafts and craftsmanship.

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All of the cloth used in making the garments the people wear and the special Hunzan hats are woven on looms that have been in use for hundreds of years. They weave 3 distinct types of material. It takes about 3 days to weave a length of approximately 15 yards of the best cloth, which is hardly sufficient to make a man's and a woman's "choga." The woman's requires 7 yards and the man's takes 9 yards. They trade commodities in exchange for the weaving. Then, during the winter, the men of the households cut and stitch the garments into durable, warm clothing.

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The village blacksmith is also the music maker. Somehow, to me, that seems most appropriate for the clang of the hammer on the anvil rings a true music. These blacksmiths and musicians live in a section entirely of their own and they seem to keep mostly to themselves. It seems that all of the blacksmith-musicians of Hunza belong to a tribe known as the Bericho.

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These people were sent to Hunza long, long ago by the Prince of Baltistan who was repaying a favor rendered him by the Mir of Hunza. These people have retained their independence and identity and do not generally take part in Hunzan activities. They even speak a language of their own known as Dumaki. This is also referred to as the speech of the Doma, or Bericho, of Hunza.

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These people dwell in a quaint village or a community entirely of their own located just below Baltit. The history, the behavior and the manners and occupa-

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